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AUTHOR McNutt, Gaye
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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses a study of the current criteria for identifying and defining specific learning disabilities (SLD) across the States, in light of Public Law 94-142's requirement that local education agencies implement federal SLD criteria in order to receive federal funds for SLD students. Aspects of the states identification procedures discussed include information related to the recentness or current status of the survey information, labels used, persons responsible for identification, the discrepancy clause (between achievement and potential), the psychological process disorder component, exclusion factors, and evaluation measures. Probable changes that may be needed to implement the federal funding procedures are identified, and possible problems which may be encountered when the federal criteria are implemented are suggested. Summaries of the States' regulations or guidelines for identifying SLD students are appended. (DLS)

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PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFYING SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES

by

Gaye McNutt, Ph.D.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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PROCEDURES FOR IDENTIFYING SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES

In the past, much attention has been given to defining specific learning disabilities (SLD). For example, in discussing the U. S. Office of Education's definition of SLD, Hammill (1972) concluded that it was not a satisfactory definition due to, among other factors, its lack of specificity. In describing the history and development of the field of learning disabilities, Wiederholt (1974) stated "...the field has been grappling with the formulation of an operational definition but appears no closer to that goal than it was in 1963 when Kirk first introduced and described the population in general terms" (p. 146). And, finally, in surveying definitions used by State Education Agencies, Mercer, Forgnone, and Wolking (1976) concluded that there is a lack of agreement and consistency among definitions used by the states.

This interest in SLD definitions may eventually lead to a consensus definition for the field. However, reaching agreement on a definition is, perhaps, not as crucial as the manner in which various definitions are operationalized or implemented. Related to this, the first purpose of this study is to determine if the current criteria for identifying SLD (i.e., the operationalized definitions) used by the State Education Agencies (SEAs) are generally consistent across states.

Since Public Law 94-142 stipulates that local education agencies (LEAs) must implement federal SLD criteria in order to receive federal funds for SLD students, the second purpose of this study is to identify probable changes that SEAs and, consequently, LEAs may need to enact in order to implement the

federal procedures. The third purpose of this study is to suggest possible problems which may be encountered when the federal criteria are implemented.

In the first section of this study, the method used to collect the states' SLD criteria is described. The second section is a discussion of the SEAs' summarized procedures. Following this, the third section contrasts these procedures with the current federal criteria. In the final section, the findings of this study are capsulized and considerations for the future are proposed.

Method

Initially, all fifty states and the District of Columbia (hereafter included as a SEA) were sent letters requesting their procedures for identifying the learning disabled or a comparable term. While the letter did not allude to the type of procedures, most states issue them in one of two forms: (a) as guidelines which provide only a general outline for LEAs to follow or (b) as regulations which are somewhat more restrictive and normally have the force of being law. The type of issuance certainly affects the degree to which LEAs within a particular state are required to adhere to the procedures; consequently, the amount of variance one might expect to find is also affected. However, it is not within the realm of this study to determine the degree to which LEAs actually adhere to the state criteria nor to differentiate between guidelines or regulations.

If the person responsible for the area of specific learning disabilities was known for a particular state, the letter was so addressed. Otherwise, the correspondence was directed to the individual responsible for special

education in the state. Additional letters were sent to those who did not respond and/or the individuals were called. At the conclusion of this, all 51 SEAs had responded. Each set of procedures was then summarized to conform to a table (see Appendix) with the following components:

1. Label used and comments, e.g., the state is in the process of revising the criteria or information in the table is based on only a definition of SLD.

2. Person(s) responsible for qualifying the students as being SLD.

3. Discrepancy between achievement and potential which includes any criteria related to intellectual ability and/or achievement related to academics or language.

4. Psychological process disorders. This component contains criteria related to areas such as psycholinguistics, perception, and neurological dysfunctions. Occasionally, language qualifications were included in this component rather than the previous one because the particular state's criteria had grouped language problems with psychological process disorders.

5. Exclusion factors are generally those labels (e.g. mentally retarded, visually handicapped) which might prevent a student from being labeled SLD.

6. The final component, evaluation measures, includes directives related to the manner in which to assess students or collect information on which the decision to label a student as SLD should be based. If specific tests or types of tests (e.g., individual as opposed to group administered) are suggested or required this is also noted.

Of the six components, the third, fourth, and fifth relate to the actual requirements to be met in order to be SLD. These components are based on what many authors term the three major aspects of most SLD definitions (Hammill, 1975; McCarthy, 1976; Myers & Hammill, 1976; Wallace & McLoughlin, 1975). The

second and sixth components pertain to procedures for implementing the identification criteria. It should be noted that some states did not specifically describe information relating to one or more of these components. When this was the case, "not specified" was placed in the table.

Once summarized, the procedures were returned to the individuals who had originally responded for possible changes or approval. The letter noted that the summaries were obviously not as complete as the actual procedures used by the particular states, but that accuracy for what was presented was desired. An asterisk by a state's name indicates that the summary was approved and any changes suggested are included in the summarization.

SEA Procedures for Identifying LD Students

The appendix contains the summarized procedures and other information for the responding states. In order to condense the states' identification procedures even further and to suggest areas of possible agreement, seven topics will be overviewed: (a) information related to the recentness or current status of the information, (b) labels used, (c) person(s) responsible for identification, (d) the discrepancy clause, (e) the psychological process disorder component, (f) exclusion factors, and (g) evaluation measures. In the following discussion, percentages listed are based on an N of 48 unless otherwise noted (not included is one state that did not wish to participate, i.e., Delaware; the one state that does not use categorical labels, i.e., Massachusetts; and the one state that has no criteria but will rely on the federal criteria, i.e., Rhode Island).

Current status of SEA procedures. The majority of the states have current procedures or will soon have them since 26 states' criteria are

current or updated as of 1976 or 1977 and an additional eight states are in the process of revising or creating procedures (i.e., 70.8% can be said to have recent criteria). Since ten states did not list a date, it is possible that even more states have recent criteria. While the relative newness for most state procedures may be encouraging, naturally, this does not guarantee practicality, ease of application, etc. It should also be noted that eight states rely only on a definition and have not expanded their procedures at all. However, three of this number are in the process of creating more definitive procedures.

Labels used. By far the most common terms are learning disabilities and specific learning disabilities. All of the states except Massachusetts (as noted previously, uses no labels) and New Jersey include LD and/or SLD as part of their terminology if not their only terminology. Seven SEAs use the terms LD or SLD along with another term (e.g., educationally handicapped, brain injured, perceptual or communication disorder). From this, it can be concluded that there is general agreement on, and common understanding of, terms between the SEAs even if the criteria used for identifying such students may be inconsistent across the states.

Person(s) responsible for identification. Of the 42 SEAs that currently have information related to this component, 39 give the responsibility to a committee or team. Three SEAs charge one individual (e.g., a psychologist, special education director, or school superintendent) with the responsibility for deciding if a student is learning disabled. Of course, it is possible that at the local level the one person designated by the state could ask for assistance from a team of individuals.

Those SEAs that do require a team or committee for identification and placement purposes are quite nebulous regarding the composition (e.g., the members are not specified or it was stated only that individuals should be chosen from a general list). Those SEAs which have specific committee designations usually require the following team members: administrator, special education teacher, teacher who knows the child, and evaluation personnel. While some states specify that the school psychologist be included, the listed "evaluation personnel" may be more appropriate since the school psychologist may not be the only person gathering assessment data.

In the preceding list of committee members, parents were not listed as necessary members. However, ten states did specifically include parents. Additionally, one state, Minnesota, noted that, if appropriate, the student should be included.

Discrepancy clause. As stated previously, any requirement related to (a) intelligence, ability, or potential and/or (b) academic and language achievement or performance was included in this component. Of the SEAs under consideration, 95.7% have some type of information related to this component. However, 64.4% have a clause that might be termed "general" and, consequently, subject to a variety of interpretations. For example, "severe underachievement" is often required, but there is no designation of what is meant by "severe". Some individuals may believe that students reading one grade level below their expected level evidenced "severe" underachievement. On the other extreme, some individuals may consider only total non-readers as evidencing "severe" underachievement related to reading.

Additionally, ten of the SEAs with this general discrepancy component require "normal" intelligence and three require "average, near average, or above average intelligence." However, they do not specify what is meant by the use of these terms. The remaining 35.6% of the SEAs may be divided into two groups, i.e., those with specific components and those with partially specific components.

States with a specific discrepancy clause component (N = 10) may be further partitioned: (a) those (N = 6) who designate a minimum intelligence score (usually above minus one or two standard deviations) as well as specific academic underachievement (e.g., a stated number of years below grade level or at or below a given percentile on an achievement test) and (b) those (N = 4) who require a significant discrepancy or difference between achievement and potential (e.g., by use of a formula). SEAs with a partially specific discrepancy clause (N = 6) either indicate requirements for intelligence (i.e., the required IQ varied from a minimum of 75 to above 90) or achievement, but not both.

Psychological process disorders clause. Psychological process disorders are often interpreted as problems in auditory or visual discrimination, memory, closure, etc. In addition, the terms perception and psycholinguistics are often associated with psychological process disorders. This aspect of SLD definitions and criteria has been the recipient of a great deal of research and controversy with "camps" being formed and professionals being identified as either being in the "for" or the "against" group.

Currently, 78.7% of the SEAs have a component related to psychological process disorders with three of this number identifying it as being optional. Of those states having this component, only 10.8% have any type of specific criteria, i.e., three states have specific scoring criteria (e.g., must score at the minus one standard deviation or lower on a psychological process test) and one has as the criterion that the child must demonstrate SLD "characteristics" and provides a tentative list of those characteristics.

The rest of the states (N = 33) having a psychological process disorder component have what may be termed a "general" component. For example, many provide only that the student must evidence a disorder in one or more of the psychological processes involved in spoken or written language. There is no definition or description of what is meant by "psychological process" nor is there any mention of what constitutes a "disorder."

Exclusion factors. By far the most used terminology in the states' exclusion components is also found in the federal SLD definition. That is, the learning problem can not be "...primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage." In fact, 19 of the 48 states use this terminology; seven states delete only one or two of the terms; seven make their exclusion component more comprehensive by adding a label (e.g., extended absences, slow learner, health impaired); and three add as well as delete one term. This accounts for 36 of the 48 states with an additional five making no mention of an exclusion factor. The remainder generally exclude only one or two categories (e.g., mental retardation, sensory impairment, motor impairment) except for Michigan (see Appendix).

Related to the exclusion factor, there are two rather obvious weaknesses which apply to the majority of the criteria. First, most of the states do not elaborate on how to determine whether or not the learning problem is secondary to another problem. The statement is made that the problem "can not be primarily the result of..." but no guidelines are provided to follow in determining this. Second, most of the SEAs' procedures do not elaborate on what is meant by such terms as environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage; limited experiential information; prolonged absences, etc. If students' learning problems are primarily caused by one of these variables, the students are not to be labeled SLD. However, the procedures generally do not describe what constitutes prolonged absences, etc. Both of these weaknesses emphasize that the exclusion component of most SEAs' criteria is very general in nature and subject to a variety of interpretations.

Evaluation measures. There are 83.3% of the states which have information related to this component. However, there are no general aspects which appear with any degree of frequency. For example, some SEAs require that standardized tests be used while others require/suggest that informal devices and/or observation be used. Some recommend medical exams, vision and hearing screening, and/or a case history but no consistency is apparent.

The preceding summarized current SEAs' procedures for identifying SLD students. While various trends are evident, it is quite apparent that there is no general consensus on the procedures. Additionally, it is apparent that the majority of the SEAs' procedures lack specificity and may therefore be subject to a variety of interpretations by the LEAs. Consequently, a student

identified as SLD in one district might not be so identified in another. In the following section, the current federal SLD criteria are presented and the SEAs' procedures compared to them.

Federal vs. State Criteria

Originally, the proposed federal criteria from the U.S. Office of Education (USOE) were published in the Federal Register on November 29, 1976. Various changes were made and the final version was published on December 29, 1977. Table 1 is a summary of these identification criteria with some information included from the final regulations for P.L. 94-142 (Federal Register, August 23, 1977). It should be emphasized that Table 1 is the author's interpretation of the procedures and is not meant to be a comprehensive interpretation.

Insert Table 1 About Here

In order to contrast the SEAs' procedures to the federal policies, the components previously discussed are used as a basis for this comparison. Related to the terminology or the label used it would appear that few changes are needed at the state level since most states already use the term LD or SLD. Certain states may wish to delete additional terms (e.g., perceptually handicapped) and two states may opt to add SLD in order to conform to federal regulations. However, it does not appear that the SLD label must be used to qualify for federal funds.

Concerning the person(s) responsible for actually qualifying students as being SLD, it is obvious that those states who do not currently require

Table 1

Summarized Federal SLD Criteria

Persons responsible for qualifying the students	Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team: Child's regular teacher (or individual qualified to teach that age child), at least one person qualified to conduct individual diagnostic examinations, and a teacher or other specialist with knowledge in the area of SLD.
Discrepancy between achievement and potential	A. Failure to achieve at age/ability level despite receiving appropriate learning experiences in one of the areas listed in B below. B. Severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in one or more of the following: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skill, reading comprehension, mathematics calculation, or mathematics reasoning.
Exclusion factors	Not primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicap; MR; ED; or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.
Evaluation measures	A. Observation in the child's regular (normal) classroom (environment). B. Written report of the results of the evaluation. C. Tests are validated for the specific purposes for which they are used; tests are not racially or culturally discriminatory; tests are administered in child's native language; tests are administered by a trained professional.

a team will need to make changes if federal funds are desired. However, since the final regulations for P.L. 94-142 were published on August 23, 1977, it is quite likely that these states are already in the process of requiring a team evaluation. (P.L. 94-142 requires that the placement decision be made by a group of individuals.) In addition, those states that have not stipulated particular members (e.g., child's regular classroom teacher) will have to do so. Several states (e.g., Arizona, Illinois, New York) are apparently already in agreement with the federal procedures while others are in close agreement. For example, some states name all those members required by the Federal procedures but state that only two or three must be chosen from the list and the others are optional. Other states are more comprehensive in their requirements but this should not require changes.

In the earlier proposed federal criteria, a formula was used which required an intelligence test score and an achievement test score. However, in the current USOE criteria, this formula has been deleted and the components related to a discrepancy between achievement and potential made much more general. In considering the SEAs' criteria and possible changes needed, three groups are evident. First, there are those SEAs which have a discrepancy component which is more specific than the federal component. These states (e.g., Iowa, Kentucky) should not have to make any changes but may eventually "loosen" their criteria somewhat if they should desire to increase their SLD incidence. Second, there are a large number of SEAs who have a discrepancy component that is rather general in nature and roughly agrees with the federal component. These states may make minor wording changes, but no major changes should be needed. Third, there are a few states which do not appear to currently agree with the federal discrepancy component. For example, Louisiana does not

utilize criteria but relies on LEAs operationalizing the state's definition. The SLD definition used by this state does not refer to or include a discrepancy between achievement and potential. Therefore, it would seem that Louisiana along with several other states will need to make substantial changes related to this component if they are to qualify for federal monies for SLD students.

As previously stated, 78.7% of the SEAs have a component related to psychological process disorders. However, the USOE criteria make no reference to psychological process disorders. While the federal criteria do not prohibit the use of this component, it would seem that, for the sake of efficiency, states would want to revamp their criteria and delete this component. It would be more efficient in that less testing would be required and therefore professionals' time would be saved as well as decreasing the time the student must be away from his/her classroom. States deleting this component would also save money in that fewer tests would be purchased, professionals would have extra time, etc.

The final component related to the actual requirements for identification is the exclusion component. The vast majority of the SEAs will have no changes to make or only minor changes. However, the five states that currently do not specify criteria related to this component will need to add it and those who exclude only one or two categories will need to expand their exclusion component.

The last aspect of the federal criteria summarized in Table 1, evaluation measures, may cause a certain amount of turmoil for two reasons. First,

most SEAs do not, at present, require observing the student in his/her regular classroom (or an appropriate environment for children not in school). While the federal criteria do not specifically state why this observation must be done or go into great detail about the information to be derived, at least peripheral attention will need to be paid to this aspect. Second, the USOE regulations require that a written report of the results of the evaluation be prepared. This is not to be confused with the individualized education programs (IEPs) required by P.L. 94-142 and already in effect. The SEAs, for the most part, do not require a written report of the results of the evaluation and those that do may not contain the specified components. Based on the regulations appearing in the Federal Register, the written report must contain:

1. A statement as to whether or not the student is SLD and the basis for the decision.
2. The pertinent behavior gained from observing the student and how it relates to the student's academic functioning.
3. Educationally relevant medical findings, if any.
4. A statement noting whether or not there is a severe discrepancy between achievement and ability which is not correctable without special education and related services. It would seem that this could be included in statement one.
5. A statement related to the effects of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.
6. If a team member does not agree with the conclusions of the report, a separate statement should be submitted.

This aspect of the evaluation measures component, like the observation requirement, may cause some turmoil initially. However, once the personnel writing the report become familiar with the procedures, it should not cause any major problems. In fact, it is very likely that easy-to-complete forms will be created that will take only a matter of minutes to complete.

Summary and Future Considerations

This survey of current state criteria for identifying SLD students revealed four trends. First, as with state definitions (see Mercer et al., 1976) there is no consensus on how to identify SLD students. Criteria from the states contain a variety of components and range from general to specific in their requirements. Second, the criteria that are currently being used are, for the most part, extremely general and subject to a variety of interpretations. This indicates that the actual application/interpretations are left to the discretion of the LEAs and that students identified in one district might not be so identified in another district. Third, the state departments appear to be showing increasing interest in changing (hopefully, improving) their criteria. Fourth, and finally, most SEAs can incorporate the USOE criteria into their present criteria with very few adjustments.

While the USOE criteria should be fairly easy for most states to implement, there are several possible weaknesses of the procedures which deserve consideration. First, what is meant by a "severe" discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability? As mentioned in the discussion of SEAs criteria, different individuals will interpret this clause in diverse ways. Therefore, there may still be little agreement found from LEA to LEA. Second, the exclusion factors can hardly be termed "easy-to-implement." How does a team determine the

primary as opposed to secondary cause of a learning problem? What is environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage and how does a team determine when they are the primary cause of the learning problem and not SLD? And, what about the student who has learning problems simply because s/he has not attended school regularly, moved frequently, etc? The USOE criteria do not exclude those students but are they SLD? Third, more descriptive information is needed related to the observation of the student.

From these basic weaknesses it would appear that the nation is no closer to unanimity as to what constitutes SLD than it was before the USOE criteria were published. The federal procedures are so general that they really do not even allow for disagreement. That is, even people who would like alternative criteria can in all likelihood "fit" their criteria into the federal criteria. Related to the generality of the USOE criteria, a potential problem may exist: With these criteria, the 2% limit for federal funding of SLD students is lifted. That is, federal funds will be provided for all SLD students provided that the total incidence of all handicapping conditions does not exceed 12%. This indicates that the SLD incidence rate could be 4-5% or even higher and LEAs would still receive federal funds. This, in itself, is not a problem. However, once general criteria are implemented, any and all students who meet those standards must be identified and served according to P.L. 94-142. Therefore, it is conceivable that the incidence rate could grow so large as to exceed the federal limit of 12% when combined with the other handicapping condition. Consequently, LEAs would

receive no federal assistance for the percentage above the 12% limit. With the current economic crunch being so prevalent, this could indeed be a serious problem for the local districts.

APPENDIX

The following pages are the summaries of the states' regulations or guidelines for identifying SLD students. The format is as follows:

1. State and date of adoption, if known. * indicates that an official in the particular SEA read and approved the summary.
2. The person or persons responsible for qualifying the students as being SLD.
3. Information related to a discrepancy between achievement and potential.
4. Information related to psychological process disorders.
5. Information related to exclusion factors.
6. Information related to evaluation measures.

ALABAMA (1973)*	ALASKA (1975)*
LD	SLD Alaska is in the process of formulating a new definition and guidelines. The following is from the current definition.
Placement Committee: minimum of 3 persons appointed by the superintendent	Child Study Team (composition not specified)
Learning or educational management problems are so difficult as to interfere seriously with the child's progress and require attention beyond that which regular education can provide.	Significantly deficit in two or more of the following cognitive areas: reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, listening, thinking or talking skills (2 or more years below grade level is considered a deficit). If at the ninth grade level in all areas, the student is not eligible.
Disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in spoken or written language.	Not specified
Sufficient sensory acuity and general mental ability exists to make educational consideration as a visually impaired, physically impaired, or mentally retarded child unnecessary.	Not specified
A. Should consider all relevant sources of information B. Relevant psycho-educational data C. Possible diagnostic tools are listed D. Characteristics are listed	Not specified

ARIZONA (1976)*	ARKANSAS (1975-76)*
LD/SLD The following information is taken from the state's definition.	SLD (draft form)
Multi-disciplinary conference which must include: administrator, someone from special education, a teacher who knows the child, personnel involved in the evaluation, and parents or guardians.	Evaluation team (composition not specified)
A. A complete psychological examination including a comprehensive intellectual assessment B. A significant discrepancy between ability and achievement	A. Individual intelligence test (usually within the normal range) B. General achievement test C. Specific achievement tests in reading, spelling, and math D. Language development test
Not specified	Tests in visual perception, auditory perception, motor development. Optional: general combined sensory test Optional: neurological and EEG
The learning problems must not be due primarily to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps; MR, ED; or environmental disadvantage.	Excluded if the SLD is secondary to other handicapping conditions.
A. Must screen entire school population B. Developmental history and cultural background must be included in the evaluation C. Current medical history and health status report D. Current vision and hearing screening E. Educational evaluation/review of the academic history	A. Standardized tests (specific ones are listed) B. Screening in hearing, vision, and pupil behavior rating scale C. Social history

CALIFORNIA (1976)*	COLORADO (n.d.)
EH/LD (one component of the state's educationally handicapped category)	LD and Perceptual or Communicative Disorder The LD criteria are being revised. The following are the criteria for P/C disorders.
Admission committee: administrator, nurse, psychological person, and special education teacher	Not specified
A. The learning disability interferes with the learning of the basic skills expected of pupils of similar age B. Evidence that upon amelioration a favorable prognosis may be made for the redueation of the discrepancy between the ability and level of functioning in the learning skills	A. Significant discrepancy between estimated intellectual potential and actual level of performance B. Significantly impaired ability in one or more of the following: pre-reading and/or reading skills; reading comprehension; written language expression; and/or comprehending, applying and/or retaining math concepts
Deficits in the psychological, mental, or physiological processes which involve interference in understanding spoken or written language.	Not specified
Not attributable to MR	Not secondary to limited intellectual capacity; visual or auditory sensory impairment; ED; and/or experiential information.
Not specified	Not specified

CONNECTICUT (1977)	DELAWARE (n.d.)*
LD Preliminary guidelines	LD Criteria are in the process of being revised; present criteria were not sent.
Planning and placement team: representatives of the administrative, instructional, and pupil personnel staff	
A. Nearly average, average, or above average in intellectual potential B. Exhibits one or more marked discrepancies between measured potential and present learning behavior (academic achievement)	
Significant deficits in areas such as perception, conceptualization, memory, language, or behavior	
Not primarily due to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps; MR; ED; or environmental disadvantage	
Appropriate developmental data and the effects of culture must be considered	

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (1976)	FLORIDA (1976)
LD Criteria for non-neurological LD and for neurological LD.	SLD
Case Conference Team (composition not specified)	Not specified
A. Normal intelligence B. Marked discrepancy between oral and written communication skills C. School performance shows marked intra-individual differences	A. Specified academic deficits, e.g., 60% of the expectancy age for those with 7-9 years of school attendance; 50% of the expectancy age for those with 10 or more years of school attendance in reading, writing, arithmetic, or spelling B. Intelligence test score not less than -2 S.D. (or evidence that the score isn't accurate) C. Evidence of previous educational adjustment and opportunities (specific documentations are required)
A. Deficits in auditory or visual perception, conceptualization, memory, or control of attention B. If neurological LD, medical evidence of brain damage, brain injury, or CNS dysfunction	Disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes (less than -2 S.D. based on the student's expected level of functioning): visual, auditory, haptic, language, and/or sensory integrated processes.
Not primarily due to sensory or motor handicaps; MR; ED; or environmental disadvantage.	Not primarily due to other handicapping conditions: MR; visual, auditory, or physical impairments; ED. (Includes list of specific ways to interpret.)
A. Observation B. Conference with parent(s) C. Certified by psychologist <u>or</u> psychologist and medical doctor	Individual IQ test

GEORGIA (1976)*	HAWAII (updated, 1977)*
SLD	LD
Not specified	Not specified
Average or near average cognitive abilities	A. Normal achievement potential (scores not less than -2 S.D.) B. Must demonstrate deviant symptom of handicap in academic performance measure by falling into 16th percentile or below for grade placement C. Evidence that significantly low scores on academic performance are due to age-related dysfunctions such that if acquisition of certain learning does not occur within a critical age range, later learning will be impaired. (Age-related functions are defined.)
Significant disability in one or more of the following: visual processing, auditory processing, language, and/or sensory integration.	Demonstrates characteristics indicative of LD. A tentative list is defined and includes: attending deficit, labeling deficit, understanding deficit, integrating deficit, and/or expressing deficit.
From the definition: not due primarily to visual, hearing, or motor handicap; MR; ED; or environmental disadvantage.	Not specified
Individual psychological evaluation	Not specified

IDAHO (1976)*	ILLINOIS (1976)*
LD/Perceptually Impaired The following is from a draft copy and may be revised.	LD/SLD No criteria; the following is primarily taken from the definition.
Child Study Team: LD or resource room teacher, classroom teacher, and school psychologist when necessary	Multidisciplinary Staff: representatives of the child's home school, special education director or designee, all school personnel involved in the evaluation, others having significant information representative of the special education program, and parents
A. Severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in one or more of the following: oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, math calculations, math reasoning, and spelling B. Achievement at or below 50% of the child's expected level (a formula for determining this is given)	Disorder may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations.
Not specified	One or more deficits in the essential learning processes of perception, conceptualization, language, memory, attention, impulse control or motor function.
Not primarily due to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps; MR; emotional maladjustment; or to environmental deprivation.	Learning problems not primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps; MR; ED; or environmental disadvantage.
A. Individualized standardized diagnostic tests. If others are used, state in writing appropriateness and results. B. Medical exam may be requested. C. Observe the student.	A. A comprehensive case study evaluation B. Psychological evaluation

INDIANA (1973)*	IOWA (1976)*
Neurologically Impaired/LD Will revise in early 1977; this information is from the current state definition.	LD
Case Conference Committee: administrator, teacher(s) specialists, parents	Rules require staffing team recommended to Director of Special Education who certifies eligibility.
Chronic failure in the regular classroom setting and seriously deficient in educational skills.	A. Intelligence test score above -1 S.D. E. Significant underachievement in reading, spelling, written expression, and/or math. The interpretation of "significant underachievement" is defined, e.g., if in 7th or 8th grade--at least 3 grade levels below; if in 9th or above--at least 4 grade levels below. Additional considerations are noted.
Specific deficits in perceptual, integrative or expressive processes which severely impair learning efficiency.	If information processing and/or linguistic dysfunctions are noted, they must be clearly related to school performance. If "other" characteristics (e.g., high distractibility) are noted, they must be documented.
Not primarily due to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps; MR; ED; or environmental disadvantage.	A. Hearing and vision are within normal limits (specific exceptions are stated) B. Not due primarily to ED C. Not due primarily to extended absences, frequent moving, inadequate instruction, or the fact that the student is non-English speaking
Written report of an individual evaluation performed by a physician.	A. Basically, standardized tests B. Educational history C. Observation D. Error analysis

KANSAS (n.d.)	KENTUCKY (1975)*
SLD	LD
A committee (composition not specified)	District-wide and school committees: administrator, regular and special education teachers, parents, consultants
A. Marked discrepancies in one or more of the specific areas of academic learning or serious lack of language development or language facility B. Potential for at least average intellectual functioning C. Use of a ratio to show discrepancy is preferred	A. Normal intelligence: above -1 S.D. on group test. If below -1 S.D., an individual test with verbal and performance components must be given. B. Achievement test scores: specific levels for student's current grade level are given, e.g., at or below 4.0 level in reading, spelling, writing, or arithmetic if in 8th grade or above; spoken language-- 2 or more S.D. below the norm on 1 or more spoken language skills
Disabilities may affect behaviors in such areas as thinking, conceptualization, memory, language, perception, reading, writing, spelling, or arithmetic.	Not specified
Not primarily due to visual or hearing impairment; environmental disadvantage; ED; or MR.	A. Normal hearing and vision (specific exceptions are noted) B. Not severe ED as judged by psychologist C. Not due to environmental disadvantage: prolonged absences and/or non-English speaking
A. Formal and informal measures B. Assess developmental, psychological, social, and educational functioning; physical, health, and sensory intactness; and consider classroom and school learning climate	A. Basically, standardized tests B. Behavioral observation in familiar surroundings

LOUISIANA (n.d.)*	MAINE (1976)*
LD No criteria; the following is based on the definition.	Cerebral or Perceptual Functions/LD
Not specified	Pupil Evaluation Team: at least members of the instructional staff, administrative staff, and pupil services staff
Not specified	Requires a specialized instructional program to provide for the child's educational progress and potential.
Disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in spoken or written language.	Serious deficiencies in one or more of the essential learning functions of perception, conceptualization, memory, attention, impulse control, or motor function.
Not primarily due to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps; MR; ED; or to environmental disadvantage.	Not primarily caused by sensory, motor, intellectual or emotional handicaps, cultural factors, nor by a lack of opportunity to learn.
Not specified	A. No single evaluation procedures shall be used as the sole criterion B. Non-discriminatory assessment

MARYLAND (1975)	MASSACHUSETTS (1974-present)*
LD (Proposed revisions should be acted on during 1977)	Legislation prohibits the use of statutory labels; therefore, there are no guidelines for identifying LD students.
Team: must include persons with certification in LD. Optional: psychologists, audiologists, physical or occupational therapists, speech specialists, etc.	Not applicable
Normal intelligence (90 IQ or above on a group test or no more than 1 S.D. below the mean on an individual test).	Not applicable
Deficits in one or more of the following: association, conceptualization, attention, psycho-motor development, perceptual, receptive, integrative, or expressive processes.	Not applicable
Not specified	Not applicable
Formal and informal measures which may include teacher observations, checklists, and inventories of academic skills.	Youngsters go through a core evaluation (multi-disciplinary) which leads to an individual educational plan. The plan is evaluated and reviewed quarterly.

MICHIGAN*	MINNESOTA*
LD	Special Learning and Behavior Problems (includes LD and ED)
Educational Planning and Placement Committee: school psychologist, administrator, teacher(s), parents, others	Team: administrator or designee, regular teacher, special education personnel, other support personnel, parent, and when appro- priate, student
Development at less than expected rate of age group in the cognitive, affective, or psychomotor domains.	Learning, emotional, social, and/or behav- ioral management problems which seriously interfere with the child's school progress or the educational rights of other child- ren. The problems require special inter- vention.
A. Displays a pattern of symptoms charac- teristic of central nervous dysfunction B. Disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes	Not specified
A. Unsatisfactory performance not found to be based on social, economic, or cultural background B. Inability to profit from regular educa- tion alternatives without special education support	Sufficient sensory integrity, motor skill, and general mental ability to make educa- tional consideration as a mentally retarded, hearing, vision or motor impaired child unnecessary.
Comprehensive evaluation by a school psycho- logist. Individual standardized tests and other observational and behavioral data.	A. Observation, evaluation, and testing of the person's intellect, academic, ver- bal, emotional, adaptive behavior, sensory, physical, and social development B. Review of the person's learning envir- onment

MISSISSIPPI (1976)*	MISSOURI (1974)*
SLD	SLD LEA's are responsible for providing specific operational guidelines consistent with broad guidelines provided by the State.
Local Survey Committee (composition not specified) Regional Screening Team: special educator, psychologist, speech pathologist, and physician on a consulting basis	Local Multidisciplinary Teams: special teacher, regular teacher, parent, etc.
A. Normal or potentially normal intelligence (detailed specifications and exceptions are included) B. Academic achievement: appreciably below normal age-grade placement in one or more of the subject matter areas. Use of Harris' Expectancy Age Formula is optional.	Near-average, average, or above average intelligence
Bender Visual Motor Gestalt Test or the ITPA	Difficulty with perception, conceptualization, language, memory, motor skill, and control of attention.
A. Not a slow learner (consistently below normal performance on subtests of the WISC) B. Excludes those for whom SLD is the secondary handicapping condition	Not mentally retarded, behavior disordered, culturally deprived. Not blind, deaf, or orthopedically handicapped.
A. A written evaluation by the teacher who works most closely with the student B. Suggested: medical report, developmental history, educational record C. Achievement test and WISC	Student eligibility is determined by screening and diagnostic activities. Recommendations are formulated by multidisciplinary teams.

LD

SLD

Includes proposed changes

Child Study Team: classroom teacher, principal, teacher of the educationally handicapped, school psychologist, and speech pathologist

Team of individuals interprets the evaluation data and child's placement; verification by psychologist or resource teacher reviewed by psychologist

- A. Near, within, or above the average range of intelligence
- B. Significant discrepancy between potential and actual achievement in one or more of the basic academic areas (reading, writing, etc.)

- A. Average range of intelligence
- B. Academic achievement in certain areas is markedly different from peers while in other areas achievement is within the average range
- C. No other services are appropriate

Psychological process dysfunction: receptive, integrative, and/or expressive skills in perception, discrimination, understanding, recall, concept formation and using spoken language and/or written language, and the ability to listen, think, read, speak, write, and perform mathematical calculations.

Pattern of distinct strengths and weaknesses in psychological processes.

Not primarily due to visual acuity or learning impairment; physical handicaps, cultural and instructional factors; or MR.

Not primarily due to lack of school attendance or educational disadvantage; vision or hearing loss; physical handicaps; or ED.

Formal, informal, and observational tests (individual IQ test).

- A. Child's native language; identification is not based on a test battery.
- B. Assessment which reflects the needs and characteristics of the child.

LD (one component of the educationally handi- capped) NOTE: only one of the following cri- teria is required for identification purposes	LD: Severe and Moderate Learning Disability This information is based on the definition.
Not specified	Special Education Evaluation/Placement Team: representative of persons who are directly or indirectly involved in or influence the child's education success
Marked discrepancies between intellectual achievement potential and achievement level.	A. Significant deficits in essential learn- ing processes which requires special edu- cation B. Discrepancy between expected and actual achievement in receptive or expressive language and/or spatial orientation
A. Perceptual motor impairment B. General orientation deficits C. Developmental disparity in processes related to education (auditory, visual, haptic) D. Disorders of speech and language	(see part B above)
Not specified	Not primarily the result of sensory, motor, intellectual, or emotional handicaps, nor is it the result of lack of opportunity to learn.
Individual psychoeducational evaluation	Psychological, educational, and when war- ranted, physical examinations

NEW JERSEY (1970, 1976)	NEW MEXICO (1976)*
Neurologically or Perceptually Impaired	LD
Child Study Team: school psychologist, LD specialist, and school social worker (others are optional). Team acts in consultation with a physician. County Child Study Team may consult with and assist LEA's.	Educational Appraisal and Review Committee (composition not specified)
A. Average or better intelligence B. History of failure or disability in one or more than one subject area or language development of at least 1 S.D. below the age norm C. Poor cognitive thinking skills and/or specific behavioral manifestations	A. Discrepancy between expected and actual academic achievement and/or expected development resulting in a listening, thinking, talking, reading, writing, spelling, or arithmetic disorder B. Average or above on an individual intelligence test
Evidence of disability in the areas of visual and/or auditory discrimination and memory or language development.	Process disorder in expressive, receptive, and/or integrative functions. Must score at the -1.5 S.D. or lower.
Not primarily due to sensory disorder; motor handicaps; MR; ED; or environmental disadvantage.	Not primarily due to mental, physical, visual, hearing, or emotional impairments; or environmental disadvantage.
A. Comprehensive medical exam, psychological evaluation, social case study, and educational assessment B. Lists of evaluation instruments are given	A. Generally, standardized tests (lists tests for visual processes, auditory processes, haptic/motor and/or language development) B. Case history; lists screening characteristics C. Educational assessment must include one individual intelligence test, one achievement test, and one learning process test

LD/SLD

Draft of suggested guidelines

LD

The following information is derived from the state's criteria and definition.

Child study team: regular teacher, special education representative, and a person certified to conduct individual diagnostic examinations

School-based Committee which is biracial and selected from a specified list

A. A severe discrepancy (50% or below) between child's intellectual ability and academic achievement in reading (basic skills or comprehension), writing (written expression or spelling), arithmetic (computation or reasoning), and language (expressive or receptive)

B. Formula may be used-- $CA(\frac{IQ}{300} + 0.17) - 2.5$

C. Or, team judgment may be used as evidence that child is functioning at severe discrepancy level

D. Options are stated for qualifying a child as LD even if s/he is not functioning at or below the 50% level

90 or above on an individual intelligence test (possibly in the 70 to 90 range)

Not specified

Not specified

Not primarily due to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps; MR; ED; or environmental disadvantage

A. Excluded are those who have severe emotional disturbance, MR, visual, learning, or motor handicaps
B. Learning problems due to cultural deprivation, environmental disadvantage, or economic disadvantage

A. Individual, standardized diagnostic techniques whenever appropriate. If other techniques are used, specific reporting procedures are stated.

B. Observation in the regular classroom

A. Educational, psychological, adaptive behavior, and psycho-motor evaluation
B. Medical, hearing, and vision screening
C. Recommended: speech and language evaluation
D. Observation in regular classroom

NORTH DAKOTA (n.d.)*	OHIO*
SLD No criteria; the following information is primarily derived from the current state definition.	LD
Placement Committee: superintendent or principal, teacher, director of special education or program coordinator, education evaluator or psychologist, and parents.	Not specified
Not specified	A. Legal age (5-21) B. Normal or above IQ C. Cannot meet academic and social/behavioral expectations of the regular instructional program because of significant performance deficit
Deficits in at least one of the basic psychological processes.	Not specified
Not primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps; MR; ED; or environmental disadvantage.	No visual, hearing, or motor impairments.
Not specified	Not specified

OKLAHOMA (1976)*	OREGON (1975)*
LD/Special Learning Disability (taken from the guidelines and definition)	LD Extreme learning problems (criteria and definition)
Evaluation by a qualified psychological examiner or medical doctor	Qualified educational and medical authorities, including certified LD teacher
Normal or potentially normal intelligence (IQ 90 or above). If the examiner believes the potential is present, reasons for this must be included.	A. Actually or potentially (e.g., pre-school) extreme underachiever in reading, spelling, writing, or arithmetic B. Inability to profit from regular classroom experiences without special help
Evidence of SLD whose etiology can be inferred from psychological or neurological tests.	Performance deficit in perception, conceptualization, language, memory, sensory-motor skills, or attention.
A. Excluded if major problem is emotional in nature B. From the definition: excludes those with major sensory and motor deficits and MR	Not MR
A. Individual testing B. Non-discriminatory C. List of characteristics D. Learning and test performance indicators	A. Standardized tests of achievement, intelligence, diagnosis of skill; informal tests and inventories; and/or data from systematic observation B. Recommended: medical exam

PENNSYLVANIA (1972)	RHODE ISLAND (1977)
Brain Injured/LD	LD Identification in accordance with HEW-- no criteria stated
Eligibility determined by special education director, special education supervisor, or certified school psychologist.	Core Evaluation Team: special education administrator or designee, speech/language pathologist, school psychologist, school social worker, special education teacher, and others as desired.
A. Intellectual potential is average or above; past and present performance and functioning supports such potential B. Strengths and weaknesses in specific skill areas	
Not specified	
Not primarily due to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps; MR; ED; or environmental disadvantage.	
A. Individual psychological examination B. Professional examination including vision, hearing, and neurological screening. When indicated, a psychiatric examination.	

SOUTH CAROLINA (1976)*

SOUTH DAKOTA*

LD

LD

Staffing committee: psychologist, person obtaining the social history, person presenting the medical records, members of the administrative staff, plus others

Team composed of the classroom teacher, administrator, evaluator(s), and other supportive staff

- A. Intelligence test: WISC (verbal or performance score above 85) or Binet (not less than -2 S.D.)
- B. Profile analysis of individual intelligence test plus support from 2 other supplemental sources (specifies scatter, alternatives for using the Binet are given)
- C. Below the 50th percentile in one or more of the following on a standardized achievement test: reading, writing, arithmetic, and/or spelling

- A. Average or above average intelligence
- B. Achieving considerably less than the composite age, intelligence, and educational opportunity would predict as evidenced by performance in handwriting, reading, oral expressive language, math, spelling, or social behavior.

Three areas of dysfunction: visual, auditory/language, and haptic/sensory motor.

May demonstrate perceptual-motor impairments and/or limitations in the skills of listening, decoding, conceptualization, following directions, and thinking.

No vision, hearing, or physical problems; not due to MR, ED, environmental disadvantage, or being a slow learner.

Has adequate sensory acuity.

- A. Standardized tests (specific tests are listed)
- B. Behavioral observations and biographical data

Basically, individually administered tests given by qualified individuals.

TENNESSEE (1975, 1976)*	TEXAS (1973)*
LD	Language/Learning Disabled Texas is in the process of revising the current guidelines.
A. Certified by a qualified specialist B. Multi-disciplinary team; no less than three members with at least the special education teacher, one of the student's regular teachers, the principal, and parent(s), when possible	Admission, Review, and Dismissal Committee: at least three members representing the areas of administration, instruction, appraisal, and/or special education
A. Manifested in academic situations B. Significant learning problem for no apparent reason C. Developmentally progressing at no more than 2/3 the normal rate	A. Intellectual functioning not more than 2 S.D. units below the norm B. Written report which substantiates a discrepancy between age-level expectancy and current educational performance C. Documentation that special education intervention is needed
A. Dysfunction in the basic neurological processes. B. Less than 3/4 the normal rate of functioning in one or more of the following process areas: visual and auditory, tactile and kinesthetic, or language.	Evidence of deficit(s) in basic psychological learning processes (auditory processing, visual processing, haptic processing, inter-sensory integration, and/or concept formation).
Not primarily the result of visual or hearing impairment; motor handicaps; MR; ED; or environmental disadvantage.	Not primarily due to a different culture, lack of educational opportunity, or not having achieved from previous educational experiences.
A. General medical evaluation B. Non-discriminatory testing C. Comprehensive individual assessment which includes language factors, intellectual functioning, educational functioning, sociological variables, medical and health factors, and emotional and/or behavioral factors	Psycho-educational evaluation (including an individual IQ test)

UTAH (1975)*	VERMONT (1977)
LD/SLD	SLD (Proposed; pending approval of State Board of Education)
A team which includes the principal diagnosticians and at least three of the following: regular teacher, special education teacher, principal, parent, and/or resource personnel (e.g., psychologists, social worker, nurse)	Basic Staffing Team: certified special educator, student's classroom teacher, and other appropriate professionals
A. Within or above normal intelligence on a test or a psychologist determines the student has potential for normal intellectual functioning B. Functioning at least 35% below both current grade placement and expected achievement	A. Less than 50% of expected achievement areas: <u>Grade Level Achievement -1</u> Years & Months in School <u>or</u> B. Proposed BEH criteria/formula
A. Extreme intra-individual differences B. At least two of the following must be assessed: academic areas of reading, mathematics, spelling; processing visual information; processing auditory information; or perceptual motor skills	Not specified
Not primarily due to visual, hearing, or motor handicap; MR; ED; or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.	Not primarily due to vision, hearing, or motor handicaps; MR; ED; or cultural, environmental or economic disadvantage
Psycho-educational evaluation (including an individual IQ test)	A. Classroom observation B. Curriculum referenced measures; norm referenced achievement tests, combination norm and criterion referenced tests, or minimum objective assessment systems <u>or</u> C. Psychological assessment according to proposed BEH criteria

VIRGINIA (1970)*

WASHINGTON (1977)

LD

(In the process of revising the criteria; some of the following is taken from the currently used national definition.)

Placement Committee--chosen from following: supervisor of special education, school psychologist, school doctor or nurse, visiting teacher or school social worker, school principal, guidance counselor, special class teacher

Learning/Language Disabled

Currently being revised; includes information from a draft

Local school district superintendent or his/her designee

Levels of functioning significantly above and below child's chronological age in oral and written language, memory, perception, behavior, not directly attributable to sensory defect.

A. Specific deficit in reading, math, and/or language arts (e.g., 5th grade and beyond: 3 years below potential/expected achievement and/or -2 S.D. below child's potential/expected achievement.

B. Determine potential or grade level expectancy by IQ and/or formula

Disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language.

Deficits in visual, auditory, and/or haptic processing, language, and/or sensory integration

Not primarily due to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps; MR; ED; or to environmental disadvantages.

Pupils with IQs of 50-75 may be classified as mildly retarded

- A. Educational
- B. Sociological
- C. Physiological
- D. Psychological

- A. Suggested tests are listed
- B. Federal guidelines should be used for counting those LD students for whom federal funds are obtained

WEST VIRGINIA (1977)	WISCONSIN
Based on draft which is currently undergoing revisions	LD
Special Education Placement Advisory Committee (at least 3 members): county director of special education or designee, professional(s) who administered evaluations, and additional professional(s) certified in the area of concern	Not specified
A. Average or above average intelligence B. Severe discrepancy in 2 or more of the following: listening competencies, oral language, written language, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematical calculation, mathematical reasoning, or spelling (1 year for grades 2-3; 1½ or more for grades 4-6, etc.)	A. Normal intellectual functioning (generally, above -1 S.D. or why the results are considered invalid) B. Significant discrepancy in achievement in two or more: readiness, math, reading, spelling, written language, e.g., 8th grade--4.5 grade level or below; 9th and above--5.0 grade or below C. Discrepancy must exist between the student's grade placement and actual achievement and between the student's achievement in relation to the referent group
Deficits in any one or more of the basic learning processes of perception, memory, conceptualization and expression	Not specified
Not primarily the result of MR, sensory impairments, physical handicaps, health impairments, behavioral disorders, or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage	A. Not primarily due to sensory impairment/deprivation; MR, ED, or physical disabilities; extended absences, continuous inadequate instruction; motivation; poverty or neglect; delinquency, social maladjustment; or cultural or linguistic isolation B. Not eligible if functioning at grade level but with the potential for greater achievement
A. Individual, comprehensive tests of intellectual functioning B. Current individual assessment	Not specified

WYOMING (1975)*

LD/SLD

No guidelines; the following information is taken from the state definition. Operational definition to be based on a current study.

Multi-disciplinary diagnostic team (composition not specified)

Near average, average, or above average intelligence.

Mild to severe handicaps in perception, conceptualization, language, memory, attention, or motor proficiency.

Not specified

Individual assessment including hearing, vision, academic, cognitive, socio-emotional, and motor areas.

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